

Barley Mill Road Covered Bridge  
Barley Mill Road at Red Clay Creek  
Yorklyn Vicinity (Ashland, Mill Creek Hundred)  
New Castle County  
Delaware

HABS No. DEL-162

HABS

DEL

2-YORK.V;

1--

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. DEL-162

## BARLEY MILL ROAD COVERED BRIDGE

HABS  
DEL  
2-YORK.V.  
1-

Location: Barley Mill Road at Red Clay Creek, Yorklyn Vicinity (Ashland, Mill Creek Hundred), New Castle County, Delaware.

Present Owner: Delaware State Highway Department.

Present Use: Motor vehicle bridge.

Statement of Significance: This bridge is one of the last three covered bridges existing in Delaware and is a good example of the "Town Lattice" truss patented by Ithiel Town in 1829.

### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

#### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Mid-nineteenth century.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: Originally there were over thirty-five covered bridges in Delaware; by 1937 they had been reduced to five: Smith's Bridge, a 136-foot span across the Brandywine; Yeatman's Bridge, 86 feet long, across White Clay Creek; and the three along Red Clay Creek. Now only the three covered bridges across Red Clay Creek remain in Delaware: one at Wooddale, another at Ashland, and a third downstream from Ashland.

#### C. Sources of Information:

Allen, Richard Sanders. Covered Bridges - Middle East.  
Brattleboro: The Stephen Greene Press, 1959. 40-43.

Town, Ithiel. A Description of Ithiel Town's Improvement in the Principle, Construction and Practical Execution of Bridges . . . . New York: Author, 1839, p. 13.

Weslager, C. A. "The Last of Delaware's Covered Bridges," Delaware Today, vol. 1, no. 6 (March 1963). 5-7.

Prepared by William B. Bassett  
Architectural Historian  
National Park Service  
June 1965

With the co-operation of Robert L. Raley, AIA

HABS  
DEL  
2-YORK V.  
1-

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A fine example of a "Town Lattice" truss covered bridge with its functional properties enhanced by simple decorative details.
2. Condition of fabric: In a good state of preservation.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 52'-6" in length (with a clear span of 40'-0") by 16'-0" wide with an interior width of entry of 14'-4" and a vertical clearance of 11'-3". Load limit is posted as "3 tons."
2. Foundations: Stone rubble and mortar.
3. Wall construction: A "Town Lattice" truss on either side. Top string piece of two paired 3" x 10"s, the center line of which is 11'-6" from the center line of the top bottom string piece. The top bottom string piece is two pairs of 3" x 10"s which are 26" above the lower string piece which is two pairs of 3" x 10"s. Thirty-four crossed web members of each truss are 2-1/2" x 9"s double tree-nailed at intersections (1-1/2" diameter wooden pegs). There is one 2" x 4" nailer on the exterior of each truss for the 1" x 13" vertical wooden boards which act as the exterior covering. The bottom of the bridge is formed by built-up members of two 3" x 11"s and one 6-1/2" x 11" at 7'-0" on center notched to rest on the bottom string piece of the side trusses and braced by two 5" x 5" cross struts. Approximately twenty 4" x 6" members span the built-up members upon which the 3" x 12" rough boards are placed at right angles to the center line of the roadway, acting as the road surface for the bridge.
4. Roof construction: A gable roof with wooden shingles on wooden lath. The roof rafters are 3-1/4" x 5" at 24" on center pegged at the crown and a scroll cut at the eaves with four 4" x 6" cross braces every ten feet bolted at center joints with 4" x 6" joists spanning the roadway. One 3" x 4" brace supports each side of rafters at 10'-0" on center from the rafter to a nailer on the web members of the lattice trusses.
5. Gables and trim: 9" wooden clapboards horizontal in gables. End openings flanked by simple wooden "classical revival" pilasters 20" wide by 8'-0" tall with a flaring top piece.

- C. Site and Surroundings: At each entry split-rail fences at roadside lead to thirty inch high by thirty inch wide flanking cheek walls of concrete facing over stone rubble with a concrete cap.

Prepared by William B. Bassett  
Architectural Historian  
National Park Service  
June 1965